



STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

301 CENTENNIAL MALL SOUTH • PO BOX 94987 • LINCOLN, NE 68509

Minutes

9/20/00

Present: Battreall, Bloechle, Carey, Davis, Gieschen, Holcomb, Kolb, Lloyd, Nolan Brown, Ortmeier, Shepard, Uehling

Absent: Fox, Hodges, Rasmussen, Temple, Vavrina, Zabawa

Others Present: Eileen Curry, Carla Sorensen

I. *Public Comment* - There was no public comment.

II. *Introduction of New Members* – Council members introduced themselves and welcomed new members Carla Sorensen and Eileen Curry.

III. *Approval of Agenda*

The following agenda items were added under new business:

- ◆ SRC Representative for SILC meeting (*Sharon Bloechle*)
- ◆ Rescheduling of New Member Training (*Sharon Bloechle*)
- ◆ Report on Dave Adams Training (*Sharon Bloechle*)
- ◆ Self Employment Report (*Don Crouch*)

A motion to approved the agenda as amended was made by Gieschen and seconded by Carey. Motion passed.

IV. *Approval of Minutes from May 17, 2000*

A motion to approve the minutes from May 17, 2000 was made by Shepard and seconded by Kolb. Motion passed.

V. *Presentation* – Nebraska Advocacy (*Tanya Diaz*)

Tanya Diaz and Dianne Delair, staff attorneys with Nebraska Advocacy Services (NAS) presented information to the council regarding the services provided by NAS. A handout providing a brief overview of NAS was distributed. NAS is a non-profit private corporation designated as the protection and advocacy (P&A) system Nebraska. Federal funds are allocated to NAS for the purpose of protecting and advocating for the civil and legal rights of people with developmental disabilities, certain people who experience mental illness, and people with other disabilities. To be eligible for direct assistance from NAS an individual must meet initial eligibility requirements.

VI. *Reports*

A. Director's Report (*Frank Lloyd*)

1. VR has signed general Memorandum's of Understanding (MOU's) in each of the three workforce development areas. Each area will now be developing more specific MOU's which will detail VR's role in each of the centers. VR will be electronically linked to all one stop centers around the state so that a consumer who provides information for intake at VR would have the same information available at the one stops, and vice versa.
2. Transition program – Jack Shepard has been working with VR staff and the schools in the transition process. This year, VR will be developing policies and procedures which will define their role in the schools. Since transition is outside the traditional VR program, it does not make sense to open the cases as adults. As a result, VR has not been able to track the number of students they've worked with in the past. Next year, VR's new data system will allow VR to keep track of the students they serve who achieve a successful employment outcome. VR staff need to recognize that a successful outcome for transition students is just as valuable as a successful outcome for an adult, even though VR does not get credit for the transition outcomes at the federal level.
3. Training of new staff – VR has developed a training program that occurs during a person's first year with the agency. It includes orientation to the VR system, major processes (eligibility, order of selection, IPE, etc.), basic computer training, and QUEST training.
4. Team effort – VR has traditionally been an individual service system, which created some ineffective ways of providing services. NE VR is moving towards providing some services in groups instead of individually. Some of the services being provided in groups include VR benefits analysis, job seeking skills, employment success skills, career counseling, and job retention assistance.
5. Elks/VR Partnerships - Each year, the Elks contribute \$20,000 to VR to help support the Solutions On Site (SOS) program. The SOS program has 3 vans that go into communities to work with employers to provide accommodations for people with disabilities on the job. VR and the Elks are trying to expand their involvement by offering to provide lunch or breakfast for business association meetings in exchange for time on the meeting agenda to discuss employment of people with disabilities.
6. Mental Health Cooperative Agreements – R Way and Rainbow Center have entered into case service agreements with VR, which is a fee for service type of agreement. Both previously had cooperative agreements with VR. The other mental health cooperative agreements are still funded at 78.7% (VR) and 21.3% (HHS). VR has talked with HHS about changing this ratio to a 50/50 split for the mental health cooperative agreements. HHS has recommended that the state mental health planning and evaluation council create a subcommittee to discuss how the VR system and the mental health system can share resources when there are employment issues.

B. CAP Report (*Vicki Rasmussen*)

No CAP report was available.

C. SOS Written Report (*Mark Schultz*)

A written report from Mark Schultz was distributed.

D. SILC Report (*Tim Kolb*)

- ◆ The SILC is trying to develop a web site;
- ◆ The SILC formally adopted a new budget and new policies regarding reimbursement. Included in their budget is a per diem for consumers of \$100/day for participation on the council;
- ◆ In the past, the SILC has not had a good relationship with the designated state agencies (Vocational Rehabilitation and Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired). To alleviate problems in the future, the SILC is proposing a mediated meeting to deal with communication issues;
- ◆ SILC is looking into developing a center for independent living in the McCook area;
- ◆ During the upcoming legislative session, the SILC will be pursuing state funding for CIL's.

The SILC invites a representative from the SRC to be involved in the meeting on September 27 to get comments regarding what should be included in the new state plan for independent living. Since no one volunteered from the SRC, Sharon will contact Merwyn or Dave to see if either are interested in being the SRC representative.

A survey from the SILC was distributed.

VII. Old Business

A. Rule 72 Update (*Don Crouch*)

A public hearing on Rule 72 is scheduled for October 4. A summary of Rule 72 with proposed changes was sent to the SRC. The council has discussed the proposed changes in previous meetings. The two most significant changes are:

1) Financial Participation – when VR provided services under a plan, they took into account the resources the individual had when determining how much they would pay. The financial policy they had in place was very liberal, and hardly anyone had to contribute anything for any part of their services. VR wanted to make the policy more realistic, so those individuals who have the funds could contribute for part of their services. The proposed change in policy drops the income and resources down based on family size. VR believes this will encourage those who have the resources to pay for some of their services.

2) Post-secondary – VR has tried to develop a more reasonable way of determining how much they will contribute to post-secondary. Currently, if there is unmet need, VR paid for full tuition, fees, and books. The input VR has received from the financial aid offices indicate that that amount is not very reasonable. VR reviewed the policy and came up with an average amount they will pay per credit hour for tuition, books, fees, and supplies for NE schools. Disability related expenses are also considered and exceptions can be made by area administrators.

B. Post-Secondary Committee Update (*Don Crouch*)

This was discussed under Rule 72.

C. JAM Representative – Grand Island (*Sharon Bloechle*)

Kris Nolan Brown will be the SRC representative at the Joint Agency Meeting (JAM) in Grand Island on October 16.

D. Committee Meetings (held over lunch hour)

Proposed goals developed by the council members who participated in the training with Dave Adams on September 19 were distributed. Committees were to 1) decide on what will be in the committee's annual report; 2) develop proposed goals for next year.

Client Service Delivery Committee - Two goals were developed:

1. Develop a way to improve the consumer satisfaction survey. The committee will get input from local offices about what questions need to be asked. They also discussed contacting consumers by phone in addition to sending out postcards. Several ideas will be explored and recommendations brought back to the council.
2. Invite different VR staff to committee meetings to address specific issues of change that have occurred in the agency to determine how they are working.

Interagency Outreach Committee – New SRC members Eileen Curry and Carla Sorensen both joined this committee. The committee identified the following goal:

1. Find out more about workforce investment. The committee identified 4-5 different ways of keeping in touch with what is going on with workforce investment. These include frequent updates from Mel Bargas and Michelle Davis, asking the VR area administrators that are involved in the workforce investment boards to submit written reports describing what their board is doing, and attending meetings. Workforce investment board meetings are open to the public and the committee encouraged SRC members to attend those meetings in their area.

Public Policy Committee – Two goals were developed:

1. To write a statement that can be used to inform legislator's about the benefit of employing people with disabilities in Nebraska.
2. Communicate with the grassroots base of consumers (e.g. JAM attendees, SRC members, NCCD members, etc) for the purpose of advocating for legislation and public policy supportive of ADA protections in Nebraska law and home and community-based services to optimize opportunities for employment of persons with disabilities.

A motion was made by Gieschen and seconded by Carey that the 2000-2001 committee goals be accepted. Motion passed.

VIII. New Business

A. Special Education Statistical Report Review (*Jack Shepard*)

A memo from Jack was distributed which summarized the results of the survey which is done each year. Special Populations will be compiling the last 3 years of data into one report, which will be broken down by disability category. This will be distributed to the SRC when completed.

B. Employment Outcomes Definition – VR Response (*Don Crouch*)

The Rehabilitation Services Administrative (RSA) has released a new proposed definition of employment outcome which would not include sheltered work. The way the new definition is worded also seems to exclude homemakers from the definition of employment outcome. VR believes homemaker is still in the definition of employment outcome and supports the proposed definition.

C. JAM Report (*Sue Gieschen*)

Panhandle Independent Living Services (PILS) sponsored the last Joint Agency Meeting (JAM) in Scottsbluff. Approximately 100-125 people attended.

D. Election of Officers (*Sharon Bloechle*)

The council would like to elect officers at the last meeting of the year, but the operational procedures state that it cannot be done until the first meeting of the new year. A motion was made by Lind and seconded by Battreall that the following statement be added to the operational procedures:

By a 2/3 majority of those present who are voting members of the council, a specified operational procedure can be suspended.

Motion passed unanimously.

E. Meeting Dates for 2000/2001 (*Sharon Bloechle*)

The October 24, 2000 meeting has been changed to October 17, 2000.

F. Annual Report Timeline (*Cathy Callaway*)

All committee reports are due to Cathy by the October meeting.

G. Project Teams (*Sharon Bloechle*)

Bloechle distributed a annual report from the Arizona SRC. It identifies how they work in project teams.

H. Dave Adams Training Report (*added*)

Adams was invited to visit with the SRC on September 19 to discuss how the NE SRC is doing and provide additional information about what their role will be in the future. Those who attended indicated they realized the NE SRC is doing okay. Adams distributed information on what other state SRC's are doing. He discussed the difficulties the NE SRC is having with committees, and indicated that the committees may be taking on too much responsibility. He felt the SRC had good communication with the state agency (VR).

The two messages he brought with him from Doug Burleigh, Regional Director of Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) were: 1) the main role of the SRC is advisory; and 2) if VR is doing anything illegal, the SRC should contact RSA immediately.

I. Training of New Members

New member training was cancelled. Cathy will contact the new members to set up a separate time for training.

J. Self Employment

VR has developed service agreement with four business consultants to work with consumers who have a goal of self employment. In October, training will be provided for VR staff. If a person is interested in self employment, VR will review any disability related issues, then refer them to a business consultant to evaluate the feasibility. If it is feasible, the consultant will work with the individual to develop a business plan and find funding.